

FINANCE & APPROPRIATIONS
COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE ROOM – June 7, 2004
2:00 P. M.

PRESENT: Hons. Boyles, Chairman; Beard, Co-Chairman; Grantham and Williams, members; Steve Shepard, Attorney; George Kolb, Administrator; Fred Russell, Deputy Administrator; David Persaud, Finance Director; Errick Thompson, Public Works Dept. Asst. Director; Geri Sams, Purchasing Director; Brenda Byrd-Pelaez, Human Resources Director; E. W. Reece, Tax Assessor; Nancy Morawski, Deputy Clerk of Commission.

ABSENT: Hon. Bob Young, Mayor.

10. Coordinate a work session with the Board of Tax Assessors. (Requested by Commissioner Boyles)

Mr. Chairman: The Board of Tax Assessors meets on the 14th and they're going to give a report back to the Commission, so I think we might want to delete this item at this time and bring it back after their meeting.

Mr. Williams: So move.

Mr. Grantham: Second.

Motion adopted unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS:

- 1. Motion to approve refunds on 15 accounts as per attached list.**
- 3. Approve Georgia Administrative Services as the third party administrator for Augusta, GA's Workers' Compensation claims.**
- 7. Consider a request for disability exemption for Mr. Iain T. Crawford of 1835 1/2 Starnes Street.**

Mr. Williams: So move.

Mr. Grantham: Second.

Motion adopted unanimously.

- 2. Approve the acquisition of One (1) Thermoplastic Premelter Trailer for the Public Works Department – Traffic Engineering Division from Transafe, Inc. of Lawrenceville, Georgia for \$36,696.00 (lowest bid offer on Bid 03-137A).**

Mr. Williams: So move.

Ms. Beard: Second.

Motion adopted unanimously.

**8. Presentation from Mr. Rich Slaby regarding the National Science Center.
(Requested by Commissioner Grantham)**

Mr. Slaby made a presentation asking for support of the campaign for community funding to make up the shortfall of state funding for the National Science Center.

Mr. Shepard: Any appropriation should be in the form of a contract for the promotion of education.

Mr. Grantham: I make a motion that we receive this as information and that we explore all avenues of any funding through CVB or other resources, as well as our own, and that we get back to them at the next committee meeting.

Ms. Beard: Second.

Motion adopted unanimously with Mr. Williams abstaining.

6. Receive report from Actuary on requested benefit increase for 1945 Pension Plan. (Referred by the June 2nd Finance Work Session) (Requested by Commissioner Boyles)

At this time Mr. Jack Long appeared before the committee regarding the above item and asked for a benefit increase in the amount of \$150 per month for the 1945 pensioners who did not take the early retirement. He asked that the increase be retroactive to January 1 of this year for the 36 people who would be involved.

Mr. Grantham: I make a motion that we confirm that.

Motion dies for lack of a second.

Mr. Persaud: That is a policy decision for you but you should know that based on the actuarial report on the 1945 plan we have to come up with \$171,000 to contribute to that plan.

Mr. Long noted that he felt the actuaries had made some errors in their calculations concerning the plans.

After further discussion, Mr. Shepard: I would suggest that you let Mr. Long, Mr. Persaud, the Administrator and I go over it this next week and that you pass it on to the full Commission with no recommendation.

Ms. Beard: I so move.

Mr. Chairman: Second.

Motion fails with Mr. Grantham voting No and Mr. Williams out.

- 4. Authorize Fleet Services to sell Asset #980679 as surplus equipment and authorize the Public Works and Engineering Department to purchase/lease a replacement Grinder with a value not to exceed \$600,000 by discontinuing the revenue deductions, funding litter patrol and funding the scrap tire inspector as of January 1, 2005.**

Mr. Kolb: I'm recommending that you go with recommendation #4 which is to take it out of their contingency plan in the solid waste fund.

Mr. Persaud: After analyzing it and looking at their revenues over the first four months, they don't really have a contingency.

Mr. Chairman: Maybe we should send this back for a little more study.

Mr. Kolb: Absolutely.

Mr. Grantham: So move.

Ms Beard: Second.

Motion adopted unanimously with Mr. Williams out.

- 5. Consider in the General Fund Budget options for FY 2004 to avoid the projected shortfall of \$4,016,000. (Referred by the June 2nd Finance Work Session)**

Mr. Kolb: We are presenting you with several options to consider in order to work with this shortfall. There is another option to hire a consultant to audit our personal and real property through the Tax Assessors Office. I think you should seriously consider having this review of the tax digest before you consider any type of tax increase.

Ms. Pelaez: On the hiring freeze does that mean that we would not fill any positions at all?

Mr. Kolb: No, we should say that this is a modified hiring freeze rather than a total freeze. We would still have to consider filling the most critical positions as they come forth.

Mr. Grantham: On the purchase orders we need to define exactly what essential purposes are.

Mr. Chairman: So you, Mr. Persaud, Ms. Sams and Ms. Pelaez are going to manage this.

Mr. Kolb: Yes, we are to the best of our ability.

Mr. Reece stated that information concerning the tax digest would be coming forth in the middle of July.

Mr. Chairman: We should probably plan on having a work session around that time.

Mr. Shepard: I would suggest that you direct to the staff to look at the six components shown on the budget balancing options list attached to the agenda item and that they move forward with those and any other variations that they can reasonably come up with and resurrect the consultant study of the tax digest.

Mr. Grantham: I'll put that in the form of a motion.

Ms. Beard: I'll second it.

After further discussion, Mr. Mays expressed his concern that the EEO and DBE positions be included from the positions that would be filled.

Mr. Chairman: We changed the word to "modified" regarding the freeze on filling positions.

Mr. Shepard: As an amendment we can say that the manpower management plan savings shall not be realized from an elimination of the EEO and DBE programs.

Mr. Grantham: I'll accept that as part of the motion.

Motion adopted unanimously.

9. Discuss appointing a Finance Committee member as a liaison to the Board of Tax Assessors. (Requested by Commissioner Boyles)

Mr. Chairman: I'd like to recommend Mr. Grantham because of his past experience with the Tax Assessors Office.

Mr. Williams: I so move.

Ms. Beard: Second.

Motion adopted with Mr. Grantham abstaining.

11. Discuss appointing a team of business leaders to study and review the City budget structure. (Requested by Commissioners Mays and Boyles)

Mr. Mays: We had previously worked with a committee where each commissioner had an appointment and it proved to be a good working group.

After a short discussion, Mr. Russell: You may want to have each commissioner appoint one person and let Commissioner Grantham and Commissioner Mays get together and write a charge for this committee that you can review so that they would know what they're supposed to look at and accomplish.

Mr. Grantham: I'll put that in the form of a motion.

Mr. Williams: Second.

Mr. Hankerson: Which would come first, the appointment or the task?

Mr. Russell: I would say that it would appropriate the write the charge and then make the appointments.

Motion adopted unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Nancy W. Morawski
Deputy Clerk of Commission

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